

# **COMMUNITY PLANNING WORKSHOP**

## **Saginaw/Oakland Corridor Study**

Summary from the 06/26/2008 Workshop

### **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The workshop began with JJR giving a presentation about the scope of the corridor study, including the project timeline and upcoming community workshop dates. A brief overview of the past workshop and the objectives of the meeting were provided.

Following the Power Point presentation, community participants were asked to break into four groups and report to one of the four stations set up in the Clark Center. Two of the stations focused on land use changes and two of the stations covered the proposed alternatives and performance criteria that would be used to evaluate the alternatives. At each station, a short presentation was given to orient the community participants to the topic. The presentation was followed by an activity designed to solicit input and feedback from the participants to gauge their priorities and better understand their concerns. Groups were given 30 to 40 minutes at each station before moving on to the next, with each individual participating in the two topics of the workshop.

### **LAND USE DEVELOPMENT**

The process used to discuss land use at the first workshop was reviewed. At that workshop participants were asked to identify areas along the corridor where the existing land use pattern should be:

- Preserved (purple)
- Preserved, but improved (green)
- Significantly changed (red)

The land use alternatives presented at workshop #2 delineated alternative land use development strategies for each of the areas previously identified as in need of significant change. Consensus locations for **change** included:

1. The West End district, focusing on the GM site
2. The West Saginaw district focusing on the area between MLK and Pine
3. The River district, including the east bank of the Grand River and the Cedar/Larch area
4. The Frandor district at the east end of the corridor

The presenters discussed the long term nature of community master plans, and the color key that describes the potential future land uses, as described below:

- **Pink.** Improved strip commercial. A strip commercial format with free-standing, single story buildings, each with their own parking, but with more landscaping and less parking in the front yard.
- **Orange.** Mixed use. Buildings of 3 or more stories, located close to and facing the street with parking located to the rear and with retail, retail service (or possible office?) uses on the ground floor and condos/apartments or office on the upper floors. Envision old town style development or the new Stadium District.
- **Pale orange.** High Density Residential/Lofts. Apartments or condos; buildings of 2-4 stories; could take the form of larger footprint "loft" buildings like the one on the north side of Saginaw just west of the RR underpass.

- **Yellow.** Medium Density Residential/Townhouse. Single family attached housing. Picture the townhouses in Old Town or the new ones on the south side of Saginaw just east of Maryland.
- **Blue.** Business/light industry/office. Workplace focused development; could be 2-3 stories or high bay spaces.
- **Tan/grey.** Detached SF. Could be existing or new infill. 2 – 2 1/2 stories.
- **Green.** Open Space.

For each of the four geographic “change” areas listed above, three alternatives for future land uses were illustrated and presented. For example, at the West End District (focusing on the GM site) three alternative land use redevelopment strategies were shown. Each of the three alternatives varied the location, density, style and uses for the redevelopment of that particular area of the corridor.

The alternatives for each of the four areas are interchangeable, in a menu style format, such that the group was allowed to express a preference for Alternative 1 for the West End, Alternative 3 for the West Saginaw area, Alternative 2 for the River District, etc. The alternatives for each area offered a range of land use types and development styles from more standard vehicular oriented development to mixed use urban forms.

Following a brief presentation of each alternative the participants were asked to provide input into which land use strategies they preferred through the use of voting dots. Participants were also encouraged to make notes directly on the plan as a means of expressing their ideas or concerns more directly. From the four small groups that offered input, there was a range of preferences and ideas expressed. While the range of ideas suggests a diversity of preferences, on comparison of the preferences expressed by individual groups a consensus does emerge for each of the four study areas. For each of the four areas this input can be summarized as follows:

1. West End: The consensus preference was for Alternative 3, which offered a mixed use type along the corridor and smaller scale business/light industry/office use to the south. Participants noted the following key additional points of input:
  - Open space/recreational uses are desirable, especially along the Saginaw corridor, and within any future development
  - The alternatives did not adequately provide for consideration of housing or park space on the GM site.
  - There is a need to collaborate with the adjacent township and with GM to maximize the potential for the larger GM properties.
  - The split of Saginaw and Oakland is a good opportunity for setting a positive image for Lansing and could be a good place for a round about.
2. West Saginaw: The consensus preference was for Alternative 2; however there was not an overwhelmingly clear direction as there was at least some support for each of the alternatives. The least preferred was alternative 1. There was clear support expressed for a mixed use development approach where it appeared in each scheme. Participants offered the following additional key points of input:
  - There was support for business/office uses in support of the hospital, although some question exists as to the plans for the hospital and the need for ancillary and supporting uses.
  - The plan should consider the need for open space in the area.
  - There was an open question about the long term market for housing in the area, and along Saginaw specifically.
3. River District: The consensus preference was for Alternative 2 which a mixed use development style in the core area of the Saginaw/Oakland and Cedar/Larch quadrangle, preservation of the residential block between Maple and Ash streets, loft development east of Larch, and walkable development patterns connecting to Old Town. Participants offered the following additional key points of input:

- There is consistent support for urban forms of development.
  - A connection to Old Town and across the river to Washington Street was viewed positively.
  - The opportunity to expand open space on the east side of the river, particularly in the existing flood plain, and to connect the open space into future neighborhoods was nearly universally supported.
4. Frandor: The consensus preference was for Alternative 1 which suggests altering the site plan of the Frandor area to create a more pedestrian friendly environment, similar to a lifestyle mall. While there was very little support for Alternative 2, Alternative 3 did receive many positive votes, particularly for the open space triangle to the north and a central open space through the district, as well as more interconnected, “green” streets. There was support for a mixed use style of development concentrated toward the north end of the zone. Participants offered the following additional key points of input:
- The City should consider the input of the County Drain Commission office as they are in the process of developing site improvements related to floodplain issues at the site.
  - Improvements in the area need to include an analysis of the Homer/Howard Streets traffic, as this is already a difficult situation.
  - Improving the connection of Frandor to Saginaw and Oakland is critical.

It should be noted that at least one participant did not believe that any planned improvements or redevelopment of the corridor were worth consideration, as they, in his opinion, represented future local government subsidy of developers.

## **ROADWAY ALTERNATIVES**

The consultant team presented a drawing which illustrated the alternative road configurations which are to be tested with the preparation of a computer model. The alternatives shown on the graphics included a set of one way roads with fewer lanes than currently exist (i.e.; a road diet) and a conversion of Saginaw and Oakland to two way roads.

The alternative graphics illustrated the overall width and lane configurations for each of the alternatives to be modeled, and highlighted the provision of bicycle lanes and landscape improvements within the rights of way.

The team also presented a matrix that will be used to evaluate the alternatives once the modeling exercise is completed. Meeting participants were then given an opportunity to provide input through a handout regarding the evaluation criteria as well as the alternatives themselves.

### **Summary/General Comments**

- Generally, a majority were in favor of the one-way road diet alternative, with a vocal minority in favor of either a do-nothing or a two-way conversion alternative, potentially with Oakland being a local street.
- Business owners and operators expressed concerns, mostly with the two-way conversion alternative, of costly improvements related to access design, one-sided signs, on-site circulation, and loss of business due to customers not familiar with how to get there looking elsewhere.
- Several of those in attendance, including bicyclists, commented that the Saginaw/Oakland corridor was not well-suited as a bike route with on-street bike lanes, and that additional green space or wider sidewalks would be preferred instead.
- Several bicyclists in attendance stated support for bike lanes regardless of alternative.

### **Additional Specific Questions/Comments**

- If we reduce the capacity, will that direct traffic to other parallel routes?

- Concerned about ability to have a good progression of signals with two-way alternative.
- Concerned about significant, costly changes needed (especially at intersections) to accommodate two-way (more signal heads need new signal supports, revised radius to handle all turns instead of only half, etc).
- What are the typical implications of each alternative on crashes, capacity, speed, congestion, transit, etc (e.g. is two-way lower capacity than one-way)?
- We should be designing for lower speeds to divert traffic to other corridors.
- Impact on businesses during construction of either alternative should be a performance criterion.
- Who makes the final decision on which alternative and final design for the project?
- Saginaw should be converted to a two-way state trunkline and Oakland/Grand River should be reverted back to a more local residential street, as the two roads currently have different functions.
- Why is there a misbalance of volumes (higher ADT on Saginaw than Oakland)?
- When is the data related to population/employment and traffic projections that we are basing our analysis on going to be available for the public to review?
- What are pedestrian and bicyclist volumes along the corridor?
- Where are crash concentrations along the corridor?
- What will be done at the ends of the corridor (cross-sections only shown for the middle segments)?
- Will roundabouts be considered at the ends and/or along the entire corridor?
- There should not be any bike lanes along the corridor.
- When will the project(s) occur?
- If additional right-of-way is needed to accommodate a 5-lane cross section, what is the process for acquiring that property?
- Additional 'green space'/wider curb lawn in certain residential areas may be a burden on low income renters, who cannot always afford to maintain additional land areas.
- Who will maintain the 'ditches' in the bioswale alternatives?
- The travel time along the road should not be reduced.
- Concerned that many bicyclists will not use bike lanes in the one-way alternative even with a road diet because higher speeds and more erratic driving tendencies along one-way roads are unsafe.
- Requested that peak hour turning movement counts are analyzed, not just ADTs.
- Suggested that, if travel time increases, people who would have normally traveled and shopped on the corridor will use 496 and do business elsewhere.
- Concern that through-motorists are a large group of users who aren't proportionately represented at the workshops.

### **Additional Concepts to Consider**

- Reversible lanes
- Two-way bike lane on one side with curbed separation island or simply curbed separation of bike lanes or bike lanes adjacent to sidewalks
- Local access drive for parking/driveway access separated from faster through traffic
- A larger scale boulevard road that will require acquisition for a wider right of way
- More emphasis on accommodating transit in proposed alternatives
- Roundabouts instead of signalized intersections

The project team recorded the concerns and ideas discussed and answered many of the questions asked.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Participants were thanked for their time and effort and encouraged to attend the next workshop, scheduled for September 4, 2008.

At the September 4<sup>th</sup> meeting the results of the traffic modeling study will be reviewed, and the discussion will focus on the selection of a preferred alternative. Many of the open questions from this meeting will be answered as part of the review, and the public will be provided with an opportunity to comment on the results of the study.